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them, and then of making sail and filling off, with the attendant risk of falling still farther to leeward and possibly of being thrown on their beam ends before they gathered motion enough to give them steerage-way, was after all such a trivial matter as to be passed over with never a word of comment.

Caesar, it is true, was not primarily a shipmaster. But neither was he so downright a landlubber as to have fallen into any such absurdity of statement. By way of freeing him from imputation of this sort, I venture to suggest that anchors were not thrown out at all; that the ablative absolute here puts a hypothetical case merely; that *tamen* sets over against their present peril the danger involved in casting anchor; that the *cum*-clause defines the nature of this risk; that the subjunctive *complerentur* is one of Ideal Certainty,<sup>1</sup> being future to a past tense (Hale and Buck, 518 and *a*); and that Caesar is at pains to include the canvassing and rejection of this seeming possibility of casting anchor so that he may logically add *necessario* in what follows. Accordingly I should render: "And though they were to cast anchor, still since in that case they would fill, these latter, as their only recourse, standing to sea even in the face of night, headed for the continent."

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#### MORE ABOUT *PRAEACUTUS*

Anent Professor Rolfe's discussion of *praeacutus* in the December number of the *Classical Journal*, I have noted a further passage, not mentioned by Forcellini, in which the word plainly means *valde acutus*. In Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 5.20, the treacherous sisters direct Psyche to take as a weapon against the unknown monster of the night "novaculam praeacutam adpulsu etiam palmulae lenientis exasperatam." Note the adverb *etiam*. To insure the sharpness of the edge, Psyche is to whet the blade on the palm of her hand. The blow is to be dealt with the edge and not with the point: "ancipiti telo illo audaciter, prius dextera sursum elata, nisu quam valido noxii serpentis nodum cervicis et capitis abscinde." The prefix *prae-* in *praeacutus* must therefore be intensive, a force to be seen elsewhere in this passage: Psyche's lamp is to be *praemicans*; her deed, *praeclarum*; after the discovery, chap. 22, "acuminis [i.e., "sharpness of edge," not "point"] sacrilegi novacula praenitebat." In placing this interpretation upon *praeacutus* as well as *acumen* I do not overlook the fact that Psyche's razor with its half-moon or sickle-shaped blade must have been *sharp at the end* also: in her remorse "ferrum quaerit abscondere, sed in suo pectore," which act of violence she could have scarcely performed except with the point of the razor.

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<sup>1</sup> Lane, *Latin Grammar*, 1731, treats of the same use of the subjunctive under the category of "action conceivable." Caes. *B.G.* iii. 12. 1 is an instance in point. One might compare further ii. 17. 5: "cum iter agminis nostri impediretur."